CROSS AND MULTICULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

PBI

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

SESSION 6

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A. Definition of Language

Language as one element of culture has a very important role in human life. Language allows a person communicating with others in meeting their needs. Thus, it can be said is the main function of language as a communication tool. This does not mean that the language has only one function. Another function is as a tool to express self-expression, a tool to make integration and social adaptation, as well as a tool to hold social control. (Keraf, 1980: 3)

Based on these functions, also mentioned that "Language is a means of communication between members of the public symbol of the sound produced by means of said human" (Keraf, 1980: 1). Similar opinion was also expressed by Sitindoan (1984: 17) states "Language is a symbol of the sound produced by means of said human, and the system has means that are arbitrary; used by men in her life as a means of communication between each other to form, express , and communicate thoughts and feelings. Cultural social nature".

Based on the notions described above, it is clear that the language was intended in this paper is a communication tool produced by the tool man has said symbol, system, meaning, and social are arbitrary and culturally. Every language has a symbol. With the symbol will facilitate communication, although not directly dealing with the object. This is because each symbol

already contains a concept or understanding. In order for the meaning of the symbols are understood, every language user must understand and follow the system language is used. Language system contains rules or rules that must be obeyed by the user's language. If not obeyed, the delivery information may be chaotic or communication cannot happen.

Languages are arbitrary means no direct relationship between the symbol with the symbolized. Symbolic emergence of an object is based on the convention. However, even so to be able to understand a language must be studied and used as a communication tool.

B.   Definition of Culture

Culture is the whole communication system that binds and allows operation of a set of people called the public. Thus culture can be defined as a "system of rules of communication and interaction that allows a society occurs, preserved, and preserved". Culture that gives meaning to all business and human movements. (Nababan, 1984: 49)

Based on the above definition, clearly shows that between humans and culture are inseparable. Similarly, between the Indonesian and Indonesian culture. This is because human beings live alongside Indonesia in a unit area of ethnic communities, also live in a unity of the Republic of Indonesia. In this

regard, they hold one culture, according to the conception of insight archipelago, Indonesia is the national culture (Geriya, 1996: 71).

Culture can also be interpreted as "the activities and the creation of the mind (reason) people like: faith, art, etc." For example, Chinese Culture, Culture of Indonesia, and Javanese culture. (Poerwadarminta, 1983: 157). Based on this understanding, we can say that only humans have culture. This is due to living things is people who have sense and reason to generate culture.

In addition to the above two terms, the notion of culture can also be viewed from the corner of Sciences Anthropology. In this regard, culture (the culture) is defined as "the entirety of the conduct and results of regular human behavior by the administration that must be acquired behaviors by learning and all are arranged in life". (Koentjaraninggrat Ed., 1985: 77).

Culture in this case is understood as a learned behavior and conducted by a group of people, cultures obtained from others by learning from the community. Culture also includes everything that is the result of creativity, initiative, and the work of humans in an effort to improve the standard of living and adapt to their environment. As a system, the culture needs to be seen from the embodiment of human life associated with the ideas, behaviors, and material that are influenced by various aspects.

Based on the notions above can be concluded is meant by culture is a result of creative initiative, and the work of humans in an effort to improve the standard of living and adapt to their environment. These limits are more emphasized on the fact that humans are capable of producing culture, because humans are living beings who have mind and reason.

C.   Relationship between culture and language.

According to Sapir (1921), "language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desire by means of voluntarily produced symbols." Language is a part of culture and a part of human behavior.

It is often held that the function of language is to express thought and to communicate information. Language also fulfills many other tasks such as greeting people, conducting religious service, etc.

Krech（1962）explained the major functions of language from the following three aspects:

- Language is the primary vehicle of communication;
- Language reflects both the personality of the individual and the culture of his history. In turn, it helps shape both personality and culture;

- Language makes possible the growth and transmission of culture, the continuity of societies, and the effective functioning and control of social group.

The problem of the relationship between language, culture and thought bothered many linguists and philosophers since ancient time. To think about this problem, we need to begin with the definition of language and culture. Language is generally accepted as a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication. And there is a most widely accepted definition of culture: culture is the total accumulation of beliefs, customs, values, behaviors, institutions and communication patterns that are shared, learned and passed down through the generation in an identifiable group of people. (Linell Davis) The definitions of language and culture imply that the two are closely connected to each other. On one hand, culture seems so inclusive, it permeates almost every aspect of human life including languages people use. On the other hand, when people need to share a culture, they communicate through language.

However , the definition alone can not provide us with a clear understanding on the relationship between language and culture. Problems remains unsolved as: how does culture influence people's linguistic behavior? And does language influence the culture in return? If so , in what way? Varies studies have been carried out, among them, a well known hypothesis is the

Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis made by two American linguists Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis describes the relationship between language, culture and thought. The core idea is that man's language molds his perception of reality.

Many linguists and philosophers are against the linguistic determinism. They argue if language determines thought totally, and if there is no thought without language, speakers of different languages will never understand each other. Nevertheless, the weak interpretation of the hypothesis is now widely accepted that language do have influence on thought and culture. Evidence is easy to be found. The problem get more and more philosophical, as Winston Churchill once said, ' we shaped our buildings and afterwards our buildings shaped us.' We describe our experience and culture by using language, and the categories built into language, its structures influence our perceptions--language in turn shapes our thought and culture. Therefore, we should take a dialectical point of view on the relationship between language and culture. As is mentioned at the beginning, language and culture are inextricably intertwined. On one hand, language is a part of human being. It reflects people's attitudes, beliefs, worldviews. Language both expressed and embodies cultural reality. On the other hand, language is a part of culture. It helps perpetuate the culture and it can influence the culture to a certain extent.

D. Evidence on the dialectical relationship between language and culture

There is plenty of linguistic evidence of culture difference. We take relationship issue for example to explain the cultural difference between Chinese people and English speakers. In Chinese ,there are more precise terms for describing relationships than in English. Chinese people distinguish relatives on mother's side from those on father's side. We have the word 'biao' to call the brothers and sisters on mother's side and the word 'tang' for the father's side. Also, the uncles and aunts are addressed differently on each side. On the contrary, in English, there are limited words to describe relationships. This difference indicates that relationships play an important role in Chinese culture. In a narrow sense, relatives are always vital elements in Chinese people's life. In a broad sense, the relationships among people around are generally considered important for Chinese people. The precise terms for describing family and other relationships reflect the Chinese culture, and the language may in turn influence the Chinese way of thinking. Therefore, relationships are paid great attention in China. The Chinese ' relationship net' is hard to explain, but it do works in China. Talking about relationships, in English, we have the phrase '-in law' to address a certain

kind of relatives, this may indicates that compared to relationships, law plays a more important role in the western culture.

The Important Language

1. Personal Communication

Language is not only a mode of communication between individuals but is also a way for the expression of their personality.

We use language to:

- inform the people around us of what we feel

- what we desire

- question/understand the world around us

We communicate effectively with our words, gestures, and tone of voice in a multitude of situation.

Would you talk to a small child with the same words you would in a business meeting? Being able to communicate with each other, form bonds, teamwork, and it's what separates humans from other animal species. Communication drives our lives and better ourselves.

Even with the ability to communicate with each other. Misunderstandings happen. Remember, communication is a two-way street that should be embraced and not ignored.

2. Personal Development

Believe it or not, some people can be arrogant to believe they can't go to foreign countries without knowing anything about the language or culture of the people in the places they visit.

The importance of language is beneficial regardless if you do it for fun or for your career or even just for personal travel. They expect the indigenous people to accommodate them and know their language.

The importance of language isn't much different no matter what your nationality is. Honestly, if you were to study other languages you will find that most of them are actually pretty similar. Mainly the differences are in alphabet, pronunciation, and grammar with the syntax generally staying the same.

We should use it to show our understanding of the cultures and lives of our fellow men in other lands. We should go behind the outer shell and see the speaker beneath.

3. Career Development

The importance of languages really shines in your career and business with companies trying to reach global audiences and markets. More and more business leaders recognize to compete you have to have knowledge of many foreign languages.

Your colleagues/clients will be more likely to trust what you are saying and there will be a more intimate relationship than if you were to conduct all communication through a translator. This could be an important step in building strong and lasting business relationships that help ensure the success of your own business.

More and more school are recognizing the importance of language. Some schools begin offering to teach a second language as early as middle school.

Many schools and employers are requiring specific language requirements as part of their application process.

4. Understanding Culture

Knowledge of other languages, as well as their culture, shows that you respect the ideas that they bring to the table and you understand their needs and wants better than somebody who does not have this background. Through language, we can connect with other people and make sense of our experiences.

Our language is the most important part of our being. It's important to learn other languages besides our own because it helps us to learn about other peoples and cultures but the most important one that we can learn is our own mother tongue as this is one of the most basic parts of our identity.

If we lose our own tongue, for example, when we grow up in a country which is not our own, in my opinion, we are losing a part of ourselves. It is an important attribute of his personality.

5. Developing Children

Imagine what it must be like for your child to develop these skills that we take for granted.

As a parent, teacher, or another type of caregiver, you shape a child's language development to reflect the identity, values, and experiences of your family and community. Therefore, it is up to you to create a warm and comfortable environment in which your child can grow to learn the complexities of language.

The communication skills that your child learns early in life will be the foundation for his or her communication abilities in the future.

The Nature of Language

Defining Natural Language

Though the exact definition varies between scholars, natural language can broadly be defined in contrast to artificial or constructed languages (such as computer programming languages and international auxiliary languages) and to other communication systems in nature. Such examples include bees' waggle dance and whale song, to which researchers have found or applied the linguistic cognates of dialect and even syntax. However, classification of animal communication systems as languages is controversial.

All language varieties of world languages are natural languages, although some varieties are subject to greater degrees of published prescriptivism or language regulation than others. Thus nonstandard dialects can be viewed as a wild type in comparison with standard languages. But even an official language with a regulating academy, such as Standard French with the French Academy, is classified as a natural language (for example, in the field of natural language processing), as its prescriptive points do not make it either constructed enough to be classified as a constructed language or controlled enough to be classified as a controlled natural language.

Controlled Languages

Controlled natural languages are subsets of natural languages whose grammars and dictionaries have been restricted in order to reduce or

eliminate both ambiguity and complexity (for instance, by cutting down on rarely used superlative or adverbial forms or irregular verbs). The purpose behind the development and implementation of a controlled natural language typically is to aid non-native speakers of a natural language in understanding it, or to ease computer processing of a natural language. An example of a widely used controlled natural language is Simplified English, which was originally developed for aerospace industry maintenance manuals.

Constructed Languages and International Auxiliary Languages

Constructed international auxiliary languages such as Esperanto and Interlingua (even those that have native speakers) are not generally considered natural languages. Natural languages have been used to communicate and have evolved in a natural way, whereas Esperanto was designed by L. L. Zamenhof selecting elements from natural languages, not grown from natural fluctuations in vocabulary and syntax. Some natural languages have become naturally "standardized" by children's natural tendency to correct for illogical grammatical structures in their parents' speech, which can be seen in the development of pidgin languages into creole languages (as explained by Steven Pinker in The Language Instinct), but this is not the case in many languages, including constructed languages such as Esperanto, where strict rules are in place as an attempt to consciously remove such irregularities. The possible exception to this are true

native speakers of such languages. More substantive basis for this designation is that the vocabulary, grammar, and orthography of Interlingua are natural; they have been standardized and presented by a linguistic research body, but they predated it and are not themselves considered a product of human invention. Most experts, however, consider Interlingua to be naturalistic rather than natural. Latino sine flexione, a second naturalistic auxiliary language, is also naturalistic in content but is no longer widely spoken.

Language Diversity Co-Cultures

Within the broadly defined and still incomplete set of commonalities and regularities discussed above, the diversity of existing human languages is quite astounding. The closest non-human analogue to this culturally transmitted diversity comes from the song systems of some songbirds (e.g. mimic thrushes like the brown thrasher) or humpback whales, but I know of no animal communication system that comes close to matching the range of diversity in the more than 6000 existing human languages (ethnologue currently reports 6909: www.ethnologue.com). Diversity itself is an important aspect of the biology of language, clearly tied to the learned, culturally transmitted aspects of human language.

Within these broad constraints, virtually every aspect of human language is variable. A fundamental difference is modality, which varies between spoken languages and over 100 signed languages, expressed via manual and facial movements. Signed and spoken languages are equivalent in their complexity and expressive power, despite using completely different input/output mechanisms. Although many animal communication systems contain both visual and auditory components, there is no non-human system in which one modality can be completely replaced by another and yet convey identical messages.

In the domain of sound systems, all spoken languages include consonants and vowels, but there is huge variation in the number of phonemes, from 11 to roughly 150. Among vowels, many of the world's languages have only three vowels, and the mean number is five, making the English vowel system rather rich with its 15 or so vowels (despite our writing system making do with six). Consonants are even more variable in number and type.

Nonetheless, the diversity of human vowel systems is underlain by well-understood regularities. Vowel systems provide an excellent model system for understanding the interactions between cultural transmission, communicative efficiency and universality. Across many languages, the distribution of vowels in formant space changes systematically as vowel number increases. This pattern can be duplicated by a simple mathematical model of energy-

optimized intelligibility. Computer simulations that explicitly model glossogeny converge on a set of vowel patterns quite similar to those observed in real languages, suggesting that cultural transmission plays a central role, though always within biologically imposed limits. These universal regularities in vowel systems can be understood as resulting from an interaction between biologically given aspects of human audition and vocal production (the ear and vocal tract) with constraints of communication, intelligibility and ease of production, and optimized over many generations. Vowel systems are thus one of several abstract universals that derive from an interaction of biologically given and glossogenetic forces; they illustrate the futility of attempts to assign such aspects of language to one or the other of these categories.

African American English

African-American English (AAE), also known as Black English in American linguistics, is the set of English dialects primarily spoken by most black people in the United States and many in Canada; most commonly, it refers to a dialect continuum ranging from African-American Vernacular English to a more standard English. African-American English shows variation such as in vernacular versus standard forms, rural versus urban characteristics, features

specific to singular cities or regions only, and other sociolinguistic criteria. There has also been a significant body of African-American literature and oral tradition for centuries.

African-American English began as early as the seventeenth century, when the Atlantic slave trade brought African slaves into British-colonial North America in an area that became the Southern United States in the late eighteenth century. During the development of plantation culture in this region, nonstandard dialects of English were widely spoken by British settlers, as well as likely some creolized varieties, probably resulting in both first- and second-language English varieties developed by African Americans. The nineteenth century's evolving cotton-plantation industry, and eventually the twentieth century's Great Migration, certainly contributed greatly to the spread of the first of these varieties as stable dialects of English among African Americans. The most widespread modern dialect is known as African-American Vernacular English.

In Literature

There is a long tradition of representing the distinctive speech of African Americans in American literature. A number of researchers[20] have looked into the ways that American authors have depicted the speech of black characters, investigating how black identity is established and how it connects

to other characters. Brasch (1981:x) argues that early mass media portrayals of black speech are the strongest historical evidence of a separate variety of English for blacks. Early popular works are also used to determine the similarities that historical varieties of black speech have in common with modern AAVE.

The earliest depictions of black speech came from works written in the eighteenth century, primarily by white authors. A notable exception is Clotel (1853), the first novel written by an African American (William Wells Brown). Depictions have largely been restricted to dialogue and the first novel written entirely in AAVE was June Jordan's His Own Where (1971), though Alice Walker's epistolary novel The Color Purple is a much more widely known work written entirely in AAVE. Lorraine Hansberry's 1959 play A Raisin in the Sun also has near exclusive use of AAVE. The poetry of Langston Hughes uses AAVE extensively.

In Education

Nonstandard African-American varieties of English have been stereotypically associated with a lower level of education and low social status. Since the 1960s, however, linguists have demonstrated that each of these varieties, and namely African-American Vernacular English, is a "legitimate, rule-governed, and fully developed dialect". The techniques used to improve the

proficiency of African-American students learning standard written English have sometimes been similar to that of teaching a second language. Contrastive analysis is used for teaching topics in African-American Vernacular English. Both the phonological and syntactic features of a student's speech can be analyzed and recorded in order to identify points for contrast with Standard American English. Another way AAE can be taught is based on a strategy, communicative flexibility, that focuses on language used at home and analyzes speech during dramatic play. Using this method, children are taught to recognize when SAE is being used and in which occasions, rather than conforming to the speech around them in order to sound correct.

Although the stigmatization of AAE has continued, AAE remains because it has functioned as a social identity marker for many African-Americans. The goal with teaching SAE is not to end its use, but to help students differentiate between settings where its use is and is not appropriate.

Recently, linguists like John McWhorter have tried to persuade the public that "Black English" is not a sub-dialect or imperfect form of "Standard English." He argues that, like all human languages, Black English is a separate dialect, distinct from Standard English in the same way that Swiss German differs from High German and Sicilian differs from Italian. He also acknowledges that

we have a long way to go as a society in recognizing Black English as anything but "full of slang and bad grammar.

Male and Female Communication

Men and women in business can be equal in almost every way: position, expertise, experiences, educational background etc. Despite these similarities, they can be very different in one critical area: the way in which they communicate. The differences in male and female communication styles can result in misunderstandings.

1. Giving Orders

Men and women often differ in the way they give orders. Many women are conditioned by the culture of maintaining harmony in relationships. Several well-respected studies have shown that women tend to soften their demands and statements, on the contrary, men tend to be more direct in their statements.

2. Emotions and Information

Women prefer connecting through conversation, while men prefer connecting through action. Based on "Psychology Today – Men, Women, Emotions and Communication", when a woman wants to talk, she wants to share her

emotions and thoughts to others, while a man tends to share his ideas and suggestions and avoids talking about his feeling. Take note that this doesn't mean that men won't talk about their feelings, but they might be uncomfortable while doing so.

3. Communication Pattern

Women and men have different conversations patterns. Women tend to punctuate the conversation with affirmative noises, for instance, "Uh huh" and "OK" to let you know she is concentrating and listening. On the other hand, men prefer to sit quietly and focus on what is being said. As a result, it doesn't mean that he doesn't agree on what you are saying. So, when talking to a guy, don't feel nervous or weird when he is not giving responses to you.

4. Asking Questions

Another difference often seen between men and women is the latter generally ask more questions than the former. Asking questions means different things to men and women. The differences in how and when questions are asked can create real confusion in the workplace. Men ask questions for one purpose only – to gather information. But for women, asking questions serves for two purposes – to gather information as well as asking questions which they already know the answers. But why are they asking things that they already know? As mentioned above, women wish to maintain harmony in

relationships, they want to show interest in what others have said to cultivate relationships. Therefore, you tend to see women asking more questions in business.

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